



The idea of having a “good cry” has always seemed odd to me. Is there really anything good about crying? I’m going to admit something here, I don’t like crying. I have never cried and thought, wow, that felt good. However, I am human and tears are part of the human expression when pain is experienced. We cry over many things. Broken relationships, divorce, sickness, death of loved ones, physical pain, loss of income and confusing situations that are out of our control are all able to produce tears.

On one hand, it seems that many are trying to do anything they can to avoid tears in this season. I understand that desire, as I don’t like crying. While our lives have been significantly restricted, we can still binge watch countless shows on our televisions, personal computers, tablets and phones. We can find some way of keeping ourselves entertained and distracted from reality, pretty much anytime.

On the other hand, there are serious things happening right now that can’t be ignored no matter how hard we may try. Within my circle of friends there are those crying out to God in prayer for healing of a beloved man who has been on life support in an ICU for over two weeks. I have talked with those who have lost jobs and are unsure that they will have something to return to when the economy is reopened. They are unsure of how long they will be able to provide for their families and feel helpless and overwhelmed. I am close to multiple people who are considered in the high-risk category if they were to contract Covid-19 and they are worried about the risk involved of returning to normal routines. I’m sure all of you have similar stories to tell about people within your spheres of influence.

Many tears are being shed right now. While we all might wish that wasn't true and that we could somehow ensure that all heartbreak, troubles and pain could be avoided, this is all part of the real experience of living in a fallen world. We all experience times of tears.

Over the past few weeks, we have been reminded often that God is using all things for the good of those who love Him. What about our crying? Is there anything good about crying? Can times of tears actually be used by God for our good?

For some insight, let's consider **Ecclesiastes, chapter 3.**

3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

***2 a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance***

By design, God has appointed times for tears. In such times your crying is not a sign of a lack of faith. In such times, crying is appropriate. You see the repetitive word here, ***time***. We are in a strange time. It is a difficult time. For many, it is a time for tears but it is just a time. This season will not last forever. Times of healing, laughter and dancing will come. Seasons of weeping have a beginning and an end. This too shall pass. We often sing a song with a line that comes from Psalm 30 "sorrow may last for the night but joy comes in the morning." Times of joy will come.

Well, alright then, we can distract ourselves with daydreaming about better days ahead and attempt to ignore the real difficulties of our present circumstances. That's not really what I want to convey. God has appointed all of these times, therefore all of them are important. They all have value for us. In times of tears God is at work and His work is beautiful.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time...

This is tough to see in the midst of pain and suffering. In such times we are not thinking about how beautiful things are. Instead we ask the familiar questions. Why me Lord? Why is this happening? How long will this last? Are you going to do anything about this? How can anything good come from this? From the first moments of learning to talk, and all throughout our lives, it just seems that we are wired to ask "why"? We want understanding. We want to see the whole picture. You know that we really are wired for that? It is part of the way that God designed us.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 continued

...Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end

We want to fully understand everything God is doing but there are some things we can't fully know. That is a work of God. It is part of His design. Our longing to make sense of things during times of tears and our inability to do so, is God ordained.

J.I. Packer writes, *"God has hidden from us almost everything that we should like to know about the providential purposes which he is working out in our own lives. When we accept that we know something, but cannot know all, we will stop striving to figure everything out. Our angst will subside and a sweet peace will pervade our souls. We can simply cry before our Lord and trust him to create something beautiful for his glory."*

Even in times of tears, God is providing us with gifts every day.

Ecclesiastes 3:13

everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

John Calvin wrote, *"If we ponder to what end God created food, we shall find that he meant not only to provide for necessity but also for delight and good cheer."*

The simple pleasures of food and drink are wonderful gifts from God in times of tears. In addition to the blessing of these gifts of food and drink, there is also the gift of spiritual growth.

When we turn to God in our tears, times of weeping also become our times of greatest growth. Ecclesiastes tells us that God uses our appointed season of sorrow to teach us to fear him.

Ecclesiastes 3:14

God has done it, so that people fear before him.

If you are struggling right now and this has become a season of tears for you, please hear this, God is at work to bring about growth. Your tears are not an indicator of a lack of faith. He appoints a time to weep, and in those times, He reveals Himself to us in ever deeper ways. He is not distant from us when we cry. He is not aloof. He is with us. He is leading us and because that is true, we come through these times of tears trusting and treasuring Jesus above all else.

If you are weeping, know that the one who walks with you, walked this earth. He wept over sin and suffering and went to the cross for us. Find comfort that even in times of tears God is doing a beautiful work within us, providing gifts for us each day and teaching us to fear Him.

We also know that one day soon “a time to weep” will be gone forever. The day is coming when God ***“will wipe away every tear from our eyes, death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”***
Revelation 21:4

You are loved

Tony